

Message Text

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ACTION H-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 ITF-05 DODE-00 PA-02

PRS-01 USIA-15 SS-15 NSC-05 EUR-12 SCA-01 VO-03 AID-05

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R 160833Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3457

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 6690

FOR EUGENE KRIZEK, CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON, FROM STAFFDEL PARKER

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SREF, RP

SUBJECT: REPORT ON VISIT TO REFUGEE CAMPS IN THAILAND

1. AT 6:00 A. M. MONDAY MAY 12, LEFT HOTEL TO VISIT ROYAL THAI NAVAL BASE AT UTAPAO. BRIEFING BY US BASE CDR. COL AUSTIN AND COL. ADDISON. US "GUEST" OF THAIS ON BASES. CAMP FOR REFUGEES SET UP BY MILITARY AND COORDINATED BY JOHN RIEGER, COUNSELOR FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS, US EMBASSY, WHO HAD ORM EXPERIENCE AND WORKED ON HUNGARIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM. JOINT CASUALTY RESOLUTION CENTER (EX-SPECIAL FORCES MEN ASSIGNED TO RECOVER POWS AND BODIES) ACTUALLY SET UP CAMP. CAMP NOT UNDER OUR CONTROL, CAMP WHITESIDE IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY. OTHER THREE CAMPS I VISITED ARE UNDER THAI CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITY. COL. AUSTIN ADVISES US RECOVERED 63 PLANES FLOWN IN BY CAMBODIANS AND 126 FLOWN IN BY VIETNAMESE PILOTS. US RECEIVED 126 PLANES AND 3700 PEOPLE IN TWO DAYS. VIETNAMESE CLAIMED BRITISH BROADCASTING ON APRIL 30 WARNED VIETNAMESE THAT AIR FORCE PILOTS WOULD BE SHOT DOWN IN THAILAND YET THEY BROUGHT PLANES OUT OF VIETNAM. COL. FEELS HEROIC ACTION ON PART OF MEN AND VOLUNTEER MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED. HAS GOOD WORKING RELATIONS

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WITH THAIS BUT THAIS TACKLE ONLY ONE PROBLEM AT

A TIME. THE US CAUTIOUS IN RELATIONS BECAUSE IT IS THAIS' COUNTRY AND DECISIONS BUT THERE IS COOPERATION AT THE CAMP.

2. CAMBODIANS ARE AT CAMP WHITESIDE NAMED AFTER CPT. WHO SET UP OPERATION. ON 5/12 VISIT THERE WERE 432 PEOPLE THERE. EMBASSY OFFICIALS ARRIVED APRIL 13 AND EX-MILITARY ARRIVED APRIL 17. FLEW OUT 120 PLANES COSTING APPROXIMATELY 400 MILLION DOLLARS. FOUR CIVILIANS WITH FRENCH TIES WAITING FOR FRENCH VISAS TO BE CLEARED IN PARIS. EVERY CASE IS SENT TO PARIS FOR CLEARANCE. AT FIRST 87 KHMER OFFICERS WANTED TO RETURN TO CAMBODIA BECAUSE WIVES AND CHILDREN WERE LEFT BEHIND. AS SOON AS IT WAS ACCEPTED THAT A THAI PAROLE AUTHORITY HAD BEEN GRANTED BY US, NUMBER DWINDLED TO 74 AND IS EXPECTED TO DROP AS MORE GET READY TO AIRLIFT TO GUAM. I WAS GREETED BY PRESIDENT OF CAMP, COL. BUONCHHONDOGUN, AND PEOPLE HAD ORGANIZED THEMSELVES INTO COMMITTEES TO HANDLE EDUCATION, (TEACHING ENGLISH), DISCIPLINE, WATER SUPPLY, ELECTRICITY, AND SANITATION-HYGIENE. CAMP WELL ORGANIZED AND RUN BY CAMBODIANS. LATRINES AND SHOWER FOR MEN AND WOMEN, LAUNDRY SUPPLY, FURNISHED THEM DISPENSARY. THEY WERE NOT PROCESSED UNTIL PAROLE AUTHORITY FOR CAMBODIANS CAME THROUGH ON MAY 10 AS IT WAS FELT IT WOULD BE INHUMAN TO RAISE THEIR HOPES. FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL HAS VISITED WHITESIDE, BUT MOST OF PEOPLE HAVE US TIES AND WISH TO GO TO US. WORRIED ABOUT HOW WOULD BE TREATED IN US BECAUSE OF MILITARY BACKGROUND. READ ONLY STARS AND STRIPES AND STORIES OF US REACTION TO THEIR COMING IS DISTRESSING. THERE WERE 10 - 15 CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTS AND A FEW WOMEN IN 30S AND 40 IN CAMP. CONCERNED ABOUT HOW SOON COULD BECOME US CITIZENS, WHETHER THEY COULD JOIN US AIR FORCE, BY WHOM AND WHERE THEY WOULD BE RESETTLED IN US. I DESCRIBED PLANS OF VOLUNTEER AGENCIES AND THAT ALLEVIATED MANY FEARS. LACK OF INFORMATION AS TO WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THEM IS THEIR CONCERN, NOT HOW LOW DOWN THE ECONOMIC SCALE THEY WILL HAVE TO START. WILLING TO TAKE ANYTHING TO SUPPORT SELVES IN US. TENTS HAVE WOODENT FLOORBOARDS, COTS ARE VERY CLEAN. PEOPLE HEALTHY AND NOT IN THE DISPENSARY. SEA AND SOME SPORT FACILITIES

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FOR PHYSICAL EXERCISE. GIVEN LETTERS TO PRESIDENT FORD AND OTHERS TURNED THEM OVER TO STATE DEPARTMENT CONTROL OFFICER.

3. REFUGEES ON BOATS TIED UP AT THAI PIER. THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 266 VIETNAMESE WHO CAME IN ON OWN BOATS TWO WEEKS EARLIER. BOATS ARE CROWDED AND NOT SEAWORTHY, YET FEAR THEY WILL BE GIVEN FOOD AND FUEL AND TOLD TO

LEAVE. THESE ARE MILITARY, CIVILIANS, WOMEN AND CHILDREN. IN PRESENCE OF THAI OFFICIALS, REPORTED THEY WERE GIVEN FOOD AND MEDICAL CARE. SOME FLED FROM NORTH VIETNAM TWO YEARS AGO AND FEAR THEIR FAMILIES HAVE RETURNED TO COMMUNISTS. MOST WORKED FOR US OR VIETNAM GOVERNMENTS. PLAYING VOICE OF AMERICA PROGRAMS (HINTED) IF PICKED UP BY US SHIP. CONGRESS HAS APPROPRIATED MONEY FOR REFUGEE PROGRAM AND THUS ENCOURAGED FLIGHT TO MEET US SHIPS. SOME RAN OUT OF FUEL AND WERE PICKED UP BY SHIPPING VESSELS. OTHERS MADE IT ON OWN TO THAILAND AFTER 8 - 10 DAYS AT SEA. NO ONE OTHER THAN US OFFICIALS SAW THEM UNTIL 5/11 WHEN THEY WERE VISITED BY A BELGIAN NEWSMAN AND IRC.

4. CAMP VAYAMA AT SATTAPHI IS RUN BY THAIS. PEOPLE LODGED IN FOUR LARGE TENTS AND FORMER US BASE GIVEN THAIS TO HOUSE VEHICLES. GENERAL DOMAU FORMER DEPUTY PREMIER, FORMER MINISTRY OF SECURITY AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION IS AT CAMP WITH DAUGHTER AND MEMBERS OF FAMILY AMONG APPROXIMATELY 317 PEOPLE AT CAMP. HALF ARE WOMEN, 20 PCT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, BALANCE ARE FISHERMEN AND EMPLOYEES OF US COMPANIES. ONLY VISIT TO CAMP PRIOR TO MINE WAS BY ESSO REPRESENTATIVE WHO COMES TO HELP AND TAKE BACK MAIL.

5. NEXT VISITED ANNEX. NCO MESS AND CLUB HOUSED 61 FORMER VIETNAMESE NATIONAL POLICE WHO WANT TO RETURN TO VIETNAM. ON INTERVIEW I AM ADVISED NOT ALL WANT TO RETURN BUT FEAR FOR THEIR SAFETY IF THEY SO INDICATE TO THEIR PEERS. THAIS PUT IN FAMILIES WITH 28 WOMEN AND CHILDREN AND 2 OR THREE MEN IN SAME ROOM WITH 61 MEN. ONE WOMAN CLAIMED US CITIZEN SISTER HAS FILED FIFTH PREFERENCE FOR HER SPOKE WITH COL. AUSTIN ABOUT SITUATION AT LUNCH AND HE ADVISED THAT THAIS WERE HOLDING HIM UP FOR A TENT IF HE UNCLASSIFIED

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WANTED A CIVILIAN GROUP, ESPECIALLY YOUNG GIRLS, MOVED OUT OF ANNEX. HE GAVE THEM A TENT AND CIVILIANS WERE MOVED THAT DAY. FEAR HE AND I SHARED WAS THAT THE WOMEN WOULD BE MOLESTED OR RAPED. CIVILIAN GROUP ALL HIGH-RISK WHO WORKED FOR US COMPANIES AND ONE WOMAN WAS WIFE OF CHIEF OF PERSONNEL FOR 41ST SIGNAL BATTALION, US ARMY. STATE DEPARTMENT SUMMARY OF REFUGEES AS OF 5/12 IN TRAT AT KLONG YAI 900 KHMER WHO ARRIVED BY AUTO CARRIERS AND ON FOOT AND OVER 120 VIETNAMESE WHO CAME BY BOAT. CHAHTABURI 750. CIVILIANS AND 750 MILITARY KHMER WHO CAME OVER LAND OR BY BOAT AND 49 VIETNAMESE WERE AT RAYONG IN ARANYAPRATHET OVER 900 IN THREE "WATS". THEY CAME OVER LAND. IN URODN 480 KHMER MAP TRAINEES AT PATTANI AND SOUGHKHLIA 300-500 VIETNAMESE WHO CAME BY BOAT. IN BANGKOK, ABOUT 400 VIETNAMESE IN OWN SHIPS UNABLE TO

LAND. ALSO 135 DIPLOMATS, 30 STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS
38 STUDENTS AND ABOUT 20 VIETNAMESE WHO HAVE SEEN
US COUNSEL. UTAPAO 432 KHMER, 266 VIETNAMESE ON BOARDS,
317 VIETNAMESE AT CAMP CAYAMA, 89 VIETNAMESE AT ANNEX.

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ACTION H-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 ITF-05 DODE-00 PA-02

PRS-01 USIA-15 SS-15 NSC-05 EUR-12 SCA-01 VO-03 AID-05

INSE-00 IO-10 /090 W

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R 160833Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3458

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FOR EUGENE KRIZEK, CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON, FROM STAFFDEL PARKER

6. VISITED WITH US CHARGE D' AFFAIRES EDWARD MASTERS.
THAI GOVERNMENT AGREED TO ACCEPT VIETNAMESE WE BROUGHT
OUT ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS IF WE MOVED THEM OUT WITHIN
30 DAYS. THAIS HAVE PROBLEM WITH NORTH VIETNAMESE
SETTLED IN NORTHEAST SINCE 1954. SOME REPATRIATED TO
HANOI BUT ARE COMMUNIST UNASSIMILATED AND THREAT TO
SECURITY OF THAILAND. FOUR THOUSAND VIETNAMESE HAVE
BEEN MOVED BY US TO GUAM BUT MANY HIGH-LEVEL AND POLICE
OFFICIALS HAVE FAMILIES WHO ARE ON BOATS UNDER THAIS.
ALSO 1800 VIETNAMESE ON LAND OR IN SMALL CAMPS WHICH
EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO ACCEPT UNDER PAROLE AUTHORITY AND
END ON.HAS PAROLE AUTHORITY ONLY FOR CAMBODIANS
NOW. THAI POLICY SEEMS CONTRADICTIONARY IN WILL NOT LET
PEOPLE STAY BUT AGREE WILL NOT SEND BACK HIGH-RISK
CATEGORY. THAIS DO NOT WANT TO ASK UNHCR TO COME TO
HELP. THEY ARE NOT PART OF THE CONVENTION SO US IS
TRYING TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS. PROBLEM WITH UNHCR APPEARS
TO MASTERS TO BE LACK OF DIRECTIVES FROM SECRETARY
GENERAL UN.

7. MET WITH ANGELO RASANAGAGAM, DEPUTY REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA UNHCR AND ERNEST SCHLATTER, CHARGE D'MISSION UNHCR. RASANAGAGAM HAD NOT YET VISITED ANY REFUGEES BUT WAS PLANNING ON GOING TO UTAPAO ON 5/13.
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FELT HE WAS RISKING ON DOING EVEN THIS MUCH SINCE HE HAD NO DEFINITE ORDERS FROM GENEVA. HE FELT HE HAD TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE AND DID NOT WANT IT KNOWN HE WOULD VISIT UTAPAO. EVEN REFUSED TO TAKE PICTURE WITH ME FOR EMBASSY. SCHLATTER DID SAY THE ONLY THING FOR THEM TO DO WAS SEND IN DETAILS TO ORGANIZE SITUATION AS WAS UNHCR USUAL PROCEDURE BUT RASANAGAGAM WILL NOT PROCEED WITHOUT DEFINITE ORDERS FROM UNHCR.

8. HAD 7:00 A.M. BRIEFING BY RIEGER AND GARY MORLEY, PRESS OFFICER. FEAR THERE THAIS WILL PRESS REFUGEES BE MOVED OUT. THAIS RECEIVING GROUP FROM HANOI WHICH COULD ADD TO PRESSURE. INTERVIEWED BY PRESS, BUT BECAUSE OF EMBASSY FEAR OF TENUOUS SITUATION OF REFUGEES AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THAIS, WOULD ONLY REPORT I WAS ON FACT-FINDING MISSION FOR SENATOR FONG AND US SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND ESCAPEES. PEOPLE WERE TAKEN CARE OF WITHIN THE TERMS OF WHAT IS ADEQUATE IN THE AREA, ETC. DOUBT IT WILL GET COVERAGE. MET WITH CONSUL. HAS AUTHORITY TO PAROLE UP TO 1200 KHMER BUT NO AUTHORITY TO PAROLE VIETNAMESE. THIS IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM.

10. MET PAULINE MACGUIRE OF THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE. ALSO RUNS HONG KONG OPERATION FOR CRS. FROM HER CONTACTS, REPORTS THAI MINISTRY SAYS WILL PUT REFUGEES OUT BUT DOUBT THEY WILL DO SO. THAIS WANT OTHER COUNTRIES TO RESETTLE REFUGEES. WORKS OF LOCAL CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS DISCOURAGED SINCE THAIS DO NOT WANT ANY BUT THE UN ORGANIZATION TO COME IN LEST THEY MAKE REFUGEES COMFORTABLE AND THEY STAY IN THAILAND LONGER. CRS WILL TRY TO SEND TWO PEOPLE IN TO SEE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AT CAMPS. HAS CONTACTED SOLOMON ISLANDS AND WILL CONTACT CANADA AND AUSTRALIA WHERE TAKING REFUGEES.

1. IN SUMMARY, ATTITUDE OF STATE SEEMS TO BE THAI GOVERNMENT WITHIN ITS OWN RESOURCES IS TRYING TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEM. THE POLICY IS FIRM. THAILAND DOES NOT WANT REFUGEES TO REMAIN. THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR PAROLE AUTHORITY FOR VIETNAMESE.
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12. VESSELS OFF SINGAPORE ENROUTE TO MANILA WERE
ESTIMATED THAT SEVEN THOUSAND ON BOARD. CANCELLED
APPOINTMENT WITH THAI MINISTER OF INFORMATION, OTHERWISE
PLANE CONNECTIONS WOULD REQUIRE MY STAYING ON UNTIL
WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, LEAVING FOR MANILA AT 1230, MAY 13.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Event:
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